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Held at Headquarters, New York,
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President: Mr. BUTLER (Australia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING THEMES (continued)

(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREED CONCLUSIONS OF THE 1993 COORDINATION SEGMENT OF THE COUNCIL RELATING TO (ii) COORDINATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM IN THE FIELDS OF PREVENTIVE ACTION AND INTENSIFICATION OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST MALARIA AND DIARRHOEAL DISEASES, IN PARTICULAR CHOLERA (continued) (E/1994/L.28)

Draft resolution E/1994/L.28: Malaria and diarrhoeal diseases, in particular, cholera

Mr. BELHIMEUR (Observer for Algeria) introduced draft resolution E/1994/L.28 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and in accordance with rule 72 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council. The tragedy in Rwanda highlighted the need for the international community to redouble its efforts in the struggle against malaria and diarrhoeal diseases, in particular cholera. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by a very broad consensus.

Mr. von KIENLIN (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union welcomed the introduction of the draft resolution and its general thrust. The question should become a standing item for consideration during the Council's general segment. Referring to paragraph 5, he noted that, although extensive consultations had taken place on a special co-sponsored programme for HIV/AIDS, the Organization did not yet have much experience with such programmes and it might be premature to establish another one. Adding the phrase "or improving existing mechanisms with the aim of mobilizing..." after "special co-sponsored programmes" would make it clear that already existing mechanisms for the control of malaria and diarrhoeal diseases should also be considered.

Ms. WILLIAMS (United States of America) said that her delegation, too, welcomed the introduction of the draft resolution and its basic thrust. It also agreed that the question should continue to be discussed by the Council during the general segment. Her delegation appreciated the fact that the European Union wished to propose changes in paragraph 5. It, too, would put forward proposals concerning that paragraph in informal consultations with the sponsors. In particular, it would propose language which would give the Secretary-General the necessary latitude to develop his own ideas and which would emphasize the need for increased attention to the question and better coordination among United Nations agencies in that field.

Mr. MONGBE (Benin), noting the spirit of understanding which had prevailed throughout the deliberations, requested all delegations wishing to propose changes to the draft resolution to meet with the sponsors in informal consultations.

Mr. CARMICHAEL (Canada) said that his delegation, too, strongly supported the draft resolution and would welcome an opportunity to participate in the informal consultations.

SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS (continued)

(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (E/1994/L.29)

Draft resolution E/1994/L.29: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Mrs. VALLE CAMINO (Cuba), introducing draft resolution E/1994/L.29, said that draft resolutions on the implementation of the Declaration traditionally provided an opportunity for the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples to inform the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations of the economic and social situation of Non-Self-Governing Territories and for those agencies and institutions to indicate how they could contribute to improving that situation. The contribution of the specialized agencies and international institutions was more vital than ever at a time when most of the Non-Self-Governing Territories were small island States with special problems. The adoption of an assistance programme designed to satisfy the needs of those Territories, by with regard to the diversification of their economies, would help to reduce their dependence on external factors and pave the way for the full exercise of their right to self-determination.

She referred to General Assembly resolution 43/47, which set the goal of ushering in a world free from colonialism in the twenty-first century. Like previous resolutions, draft resolution E/1994/L.29 requested the Council to recommend specific action to the specialized agencies and international institutions. It contained a specific reference to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held recently in Barbados, which connection drew attention to paragraph 8. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution, as revised during informal consultations, would be widely supported in the Council and adopted by consensus.

Ms. WILLIAMS (United States of America) expressed concern about some of the language in the draft resolution. Her delegation had already indicated its willingness to work with other interested delegations on certain drafting changes. While it believed that the reference to the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States was positive, it none the less wished to ensure that that reference and the implications of the resolution were consistent with the Charter of the United Nations.

(d) HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (continued) (E/1994/L.32)

Draft decision E/1994/L.32: Composition of the staff of the Centre for Human Rights

Mr. FERNANDEZ PALACIOS (Cuba) introduced draft decision E/1994/L.32 on behalf of its sponsors, which had been joined by the Republic of Iran. The draft decision was intended to ensure compliance with the request contained in paragraph 3 of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/56. If a report on the current geographical distribution of posts in the staff of the Centre was submitted, the sponsors would reassess the need for the draft decision and would consider deferring discussion of the report to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly after the Economic and Social Council had taken note of it.

Draft decision 23 of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Mr. REZVANI (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, referred to the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union on 22 July. The position of his Government on draft decision 23 of the Commission on Human Rights had already been made clear. The draft decision was politically motivated and deliberately ignored the real situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. For three consecutive years prior to the forty-eighth session of the Commission, his delegation had been completely open, and resolutions had been adopted by consensus. That demonstrated that it had no difficulty with constructive and positive cooperation. However, that consensus-building approach had been undermined when the Group of Western European and Other States had submitted an accusatory draft resolution in 1992. At that point, the spirit of cooperation had given way to suspicion and confrontation and there seemed to be no change in sight. Indeed, during the fiftieth session of the Commission on Human Rights, the representative of the European Union had referred to a secretly drafted resolution.

Iranian authorities had taken thorough and extensive measures to bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against Iranian Christian priests. Hard evidence and terrorist confessions implicated the terrorist organization Mojahedin-e Khalq (MKO) in the recent assassinations of Christians and the bombing of holy shrines in Iran. Some Western countries, however, preferred to ignore that fact and to call for the protection of Iranian Christians, who had been engaging in religious activities in complete freedom.

Following the recent tragic incidents and the terrorists confession, the ambassadors of the States member of the European Union in Tehran had been invited to visit the perpetrators. Unfortunately, thus far, none of them had accepted that invitation. It was well known that many Western countries were a base and a safe haven for MKO terrorists. His Government had concrete

(Mr. Rezvani)

evidence that some of the terrorist activities of that organization were routinely carried out by telephone to the MKO headquarters in Western countries, where no attempt was being made to put an end to such activities. His delegation once again called upon the Western countries not to allow terrorists to use their countries as bases for murder.

(e) ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (E/1994/L.30)

Draft resolution E/1994/L.30: International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Mrs. PICO ESTRADA (Observer for Argentina) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, which had been joined by Angola, Bolivia and the Philippines, and in accordance with rule 72 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Mr. BELHIMEUR (Observer for Algeria) referred to a draft resolution contained in the report on the thirty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/1994/27), entitled "Women and children in the process of the elimination of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic South Africa". That draft resolution had been elaborated by the Group of African States at the most recent session of the Commission on the Status of Women and endorsed by the Group of 77 and China. The Council had been requested to defer action on it pending the outcome of informal consultations. With the election of a democratic Government in South Africa, the draft resolution was no longer relevant. The Group of African States wished to withdraw it in accordance with the provisions of rule 67 (2) of the rules or procedure of the Economic and Social Council.

The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to adopt the Algerian proposal to withdraw the resolution in accordance with the provisions of rule 67 (2) of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council.

It was so decided.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (continued) (E/1994/L.27)

Draft resolution E/1994/L.27: Operational activities segment of the Economic and Social Council

The PRESIDENT said that the Council had been requested to defer on draft resolution E/1994/L.27, submitted by the President so that it could be taken simultaneously with the decision on a theme for the operational activities segment of the substantive session of 1995.

He drew the Council's attention to two decisions of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund

(The President)

which required action by the General Assembly, namely, decision 94/12 entitled "Office for Project Services" and decision 94/21 entitled "Commemoration of the Twenty-fifth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund" (E/1994/35 (Part III). If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to endorse those two decisions and recommend their approval to the General Assembly.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 on operational activities (E/1994/64 and Add.1 and 2), the report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population on the work of its first regular session (E/1994/35, Parts I, II and III), the report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on the work of its first regular session of 1994 (E/1994/34, Parts I, II and III), the report of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (E/1994/84) and the note by the Secretariat on a summary of issues before the Economic and Social Council at the operational activities segment (E/1994/93).

It was so decided.

COORDINATION OF UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES RELATED TO HIV/AIDS (continued) (E/1994/L.18/Rev.1)

Mr. CARMICHAEL (Canada) said that Nepal and Paraguay had joined the sponsors of draft resolution E/1994/L.18/Rev.1.

The PRESIDENT drew attention to the procedure for setting up the joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS under draft resolution E/1994/L.18/Rev.1 and stressed that the Council, at the final stages of consultations, would have to establish clear principles of governance for the programme. For example, it had not yet been determined to which part of the United Nations system the programme would report. Referring to paragraph 15 of the annex to the draft resolution, he pointed out that the theme group on HIV/AIDS to be established would be very much under the direction of the resident coordinator. He took it that the Council wished to adopt draft resolution A/1994/L.18/Rev.1.

It was so decided.

REGIONAL COORDINATION IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS (A/49/104-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, E/1994/50 and Add.1 and 2, E/1994/51-55, E/1994/61 and 81)

Mr. BERTHELOT [Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)] stressed the importance of supporting the reform process in the economies in transition since that was a long and complex process and had a high social cost. The development of the economic situation in Central Europe

(Mr. Berthelot)

had given rise to a certain optimism, while economic trends in the economies of the Commonwealth of Independent States were cause for concern, although notable progress had been made in the field of inflation. Cooperation among United Nations agencies in assisting the transition efforts of the countries concerned was vitally important. At a recent gathering of representatives of those agencies for the European region, agreement had been reached on the need to give equal attention to social concerns so that they did not have a negative impact on economic development.

The elaboration of legal instruments and norms acceptable to all countries and the development of infrastructure networks across national boundaries were powerful factors in favour of integration. Many conventions, norms and standards relating to trade, transport and the environment had been negotiated in the ECE framework. Most of them had a direct or indirect effect on trade. Other of the Commission had to be taken into account by non-ECE exporters in view of the important ECE market. Still others, aimed mainly at environmental protection, affected production processes and generally led to increases in production costs. That might trigger trade disputes between ECE producers and those that were not obliged to comply with strict norms. The Commission intended to explore with UNCTAD, WTO and the other regional commissions the differences in norms and their impact on trade as well as possibilities for harmonization.

The Economic Commission for Europe was cooperating in the follow-up to the Rio Conference and felt that it was important to make a joint contribution to preparations for and the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. The Commission had also proposed that the regional commissions should undertake a joint analysis of the impact of international immigration on both the host countries and the countries of origin.

Mr. AHMED [Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)] said that the continued high growth rate achieved by developing countries in the Asian and Pacific region was substantially due to domestic policy reforms to ensure macroeconomic stability, the expanded role of the private sector, establishment of competitive domestic markets, liberalization of trade and exchange rates, greater openness through foreign investment and technologies and a wide range of fiscal, financial and institutional reforms. Regional cooperation was also playing an important role in sustaining economic growth. The unique Asian solution to practical problems of economic cooperation among countries at different stages of development was based on the establishment of growth triangles, designed to exploit complementarities in labour, capital and natural resources in neighbouring countries.

(Mr. Ahmed)

A particularly welcomed development had been the strengthening of cooperation among subregional organizations, which should enable countries to take advantage of the growing potential in intraregional trade, investment and technology transfer. At its fiftieth session, the Commission had given special emphasis to strengthening cooperation among ESCAP and subregional organizations in order to facilitate the exchange of experience and promote growth.

Integrating the region's least developed, land-locked and island economies as well as the economies in transition into the mainstream of development remained a major concern. The Commission had taken a number of important in that regard decisions, including the adoption of a resolution on investment-related technology transfer, and had reviewed progress made in implementing the action plan for regional economic cooperation in trade and investment. At its fiftieth session, the Commission had also drawn up a draft action plan on infrastructure development in Asia and the Pacific, showing the increasing constraints on growth resulting from deficiencies in physical infrastructure and the magnitude of investment required to overcome those deficiencies. In coming years, ESCAP would be engaged in the task of assisting countries in mobilizing resources for infrastructures development.

The concern about environmental degradation due to rising energy requirements, overuse of land for agricultural production and unsustainable exploitation of forest resources had also been given considerable attention. The Commission had underscored the need for prudent economic policies with adequate safeguards for environmental protection and planning as well as integration of sustainable-development issues into decision-making.

In spite of domestic policy reforms and increased regional cooperation, the performance of the region's economies would significantly depend on the external economic environment. At its fiftieth session, the Commission had expressed optimism that the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations was a major step towards promotion of a freer world trading system. Nevertheless, there was concern at the tendency among some developed market economies to link social-policy issues to the international trade agenda.

The Commission would continue to do its best to accelerate the development of the disadvantaged economies of the region by encouraging them to strengthen domestic policy reforms and promoting economic and technical cooperation among developing countries within the region. Nevertheless, the Council should be aware of the inadequacy of official financial support. Most donor countries had failed to meet the internationally accepted targets for ODA, even though many new countries had joined the ranks of those requesting

(Mr. Ahmed)

such assistance. Lastly, he expressed concern at the fact that international arms producers and traders were vigorously pushing the sale of weapons in the region. The potential destabilizing impact of such an arms build-up was obvious.

Mr. ROSENTHAL [Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)] said that while growth in Latin American and Caribbean countries had been moderate, intra-Latin American trade had intensified as a result of new integration agreements. However, there remained three main obstacles to the development of the countries in the region: in spite of diversification and expansion of the export sector, imports had grown faster than exports, levels of savings and investment were insufficient and there was an immense backlog of social problems. With regard to the ECLAC programme of work, member Governments had agreed that the primary feature should be relevance. At its twenty-fifth session, ECLAC had discussed ways to enhance the linkages of the countries of the region with the international economy and to develop intraregional economic integration. In the current process of restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, adequate consideration should be given to the value of the regional and multisectoral approach taken by ECLAC.

Mr. YAKER [Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)] said the tragic situation of many African countries deserved the immediate attention of the Economic and Social Council which should play a vital role in establishing preventive measures to ensure greater participation by Africa in the world economy. Since the early 1980s, the African continent had experienced the continuous deterioration of economic and social conditions, reflected in limited access to health services, education and other basic amenities. The region's economies had been further distressed by natural and man-made disasters such as drought and civil strife. To a large extent, future prospects depended on the establishment of a stable political climate to build the confidence of investors. The region should meet those political challenges by creating an environment conducive to the increased participation of the private sector and non-governmental organizations. The international community should render support by means of effective debt reduction measures, increased resource flows and improved terms of trade.

The activities of ECA promoted reform and covered a wide range of issues which included human resources development and utilization; information systems development; economic cooperation and integration; agriculture and rural development; energy resources and science and technology for development. In their resolve to integrate their economies, African Governments had established the African Economic Community on the basis of a

(Mr. Yaker)

regional and integrated approach to development. The development of a regional position on global issues such as trade, population and Agenda 21 depended on the ability of ECA to assume a central coordinating role. An overemphasis on national issues had led to the marginalization of regional commissions and their activities. In addition, regional commissions continued to be bypassed in their legitimate claim to extrabudgetary resources for executing regional operational projects and activities. However, ECA welcomed recent recognition of the need to strengthen interregional cooperation arrangements between institutions to allow for cross-fertilization and harmonization of activities.

In the light of recent developments in South Africa, including the dismantling of apartheid and the holding of free and fair elections, he endorsed the draft recommendation on the readmission of democratic South Africa as a member of the Economic Commission for Africa (E/1994/50). Mindful that Africa's development was primarily the responsibility of African Governments, he reaffirmed the commitment of ECA to promote the socio-economic development of that continent and called upon the development partners of ECA to support its efforts.

Mr. BAKJAJI [Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)] said that the region of Western Asia continued to suffer the consequences of wars and political conflicts. The economic recession had given rise to uncertainty among the population, particularly young people, and had led to increased unemployment and deteriorating economic and social conditions which threatened political and social stability. The current and future economic outcome of the region of Western Asia depended on several factors, including the ultimate resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict which had exhausted enormous human and material resources that could have been utilized for the economic and social development of the region. The countries of Western Asia were in transition to a market economy, and many had implemented economic reforms and policies aimed at increasing the role of the private sector in development.

In response to recent developments on the international scene, the secretariat of ESCWA had modified its programme of work in order to enhance its role and to become a none efficient centre of support for the promotion of economic integration among its member States. In order to meet the needs of the region in future decades, ESCWA had concentrated its activities in five basic areas: use of natural resources, improving standards of living, economic cooperation and development, regional development and specific issues affecting the least developed countries and areas affected by war. Modifications regarding the mid-term plan for the period 1992-1997 had been

(Mr. Bakjaji)

introduced to strengthen technical cooperation by adopting an approach based on the economic and social priorities of member States. With a view to strengthening the role of ESCWA and enhancing the efficiency of its services, the secretariat had attempted to strengthen the capacity of governmental and non-governmental institutions to promote sustainable development and had set up a regional forum to discuss issues as they emerged.

Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and cultural fields contained in document E/1994/50, he introduced it on behalf of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions. The past year had produced some tangible results from the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the regional commissions. Among major developments, an additional 20 per cent of the posts for regional advisers had been decentralized to the regional commissions, increasing the human resources at their disposal from 40 per cent to 60 per cent of total staff. In the field of natural resources and energy, the General Assembly had agreed to decentralize nine Professional and nine General Service posts. While that fell short of expectations, it was hoped that through the recently established Management Board of the United Nations Technical Cooperation Programme in Natural Resources and Energy, further improvements in the implementation of an integrated programme could be achieved. He also noted the establishment of a UNDP/regional commissions task force which would serve as a forum to address issues of common concern.

The regional commissions had followed up on the Secretary-General's initiative to establish more systematic annual inter-agency consultations to review trends and exchange information on programmes and initiatives, which was discussed in detail in chapter III of the report. He drew attention to draft resolutions and resolutions adopted by the regional commissions calling for action by the Economic and Social Council contained in section I A. Among the decisions of the various regional commissions contained in section I B, special mention should be made of resolutions concerning the preparatory work for the Fourth World Conference on Women, the World Summit for Social Development, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and the issue of economic cooperation and integration in each region. The brief summary on the work of the regional commissions in the past year and on regional cooperation contained in section II provided an overview of the rapidly changing political, economic and social environment within which those activities had taken place.

Section III dealt with the meetings of the executive secretaries and their deliberation on matters such as coordination, decentralization of authority and administration, relations with UNDP, joint programmes with

(Mr. Bakjaji)

specialized agencies, training, and regional preparations for the forthcoming international conferences. Section IV contained a proposal for interregional cooperation in social development dealing with the impact of international migration in countries of destination and countries of origin. Finally, section V contained the consolidated report of the regional commissions on the conclusions of a review of the relevant provisions of chapter 38 of Agenda 21 and plans for its implementation.

Mr. MONGBE (Benin) said that he regretted that insufficient time had been allotted for consideration of the reports of the executive secretaries of the regional economic commissions. He hoped that the Council could improve on its working methods for future sessions.

As for the report of the Economic Commission for Africa, it came as no surprise that many problems had been raised and negative trends reported. Africa was among the five top priorities for United Nations action and many programmes had been designed, but no resources had been allocated for their implementation. The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was almost carbon copy of the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. Both shared a cruel lack of resources for implementation and as the coordinator of economic and social activities within the United Nations system, the Council must take action to improve the situation. He had grown weary of repeating himself on the subject of the poverty of Africa. The international community must shoulder its responsibilities in that area.

He regretted that the report of the Secretary-General contained no mention of the Convention to Combat Desertification and it should have reflected the importance Africa attached to that Convention.

The PRESIDENT said that the time available for the consideration of the item had been truncated as a consequence of the institutional reform of the Council and the elimination of the economic and social committees. The Council could decide, however, to allocate more time to any subject, and would do so in the present case. The documentation had been available to delegations for study for quite some time.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.